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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION BRASILIA SUMMIT STRATEGIC
ENERGY AND DEFENSE ALLIANCE BETWEEN PRESIDENTS
KIRCHNER LULA AND CHAVEZ ALLEGED MEETING BETWEEN A/S
SHANNON AND PRESIDENT KIRCHNER 01/20/06

11. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's leading international stories include Bin Laden's warning that he is preparing new attacks in the US; French President Chirac's warning that nuclear weapons could be used as a response to a state terrorist attack; French Defense Minister offering Argentina five supply radars for Super Etendard navy aircraft; Presidents Kirchner, Lula and Chavez' agreement to move on the construction of a proposed 8,000-km natural gas pipeline that will go across South America, oil exploration business and coordination of the three countries' defense policies; President Kirchner's statement that Mercosur will not hinder an eventual FTA between the US and Uruguay; and an alleged meeting between A/S Thomas Shannon and President Kirchner in La Paz. Conservative "La Prensa" and "Buenos Aires Herald" cover press conference by John Kelly Jr. on a new satellite coverage to prevent natural disasters.

12. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "Kirchner, Lula and Chavez make progress on energy and defense issues"

Natasha Niebieskikwiat, on special assignment in Brasilia for leading "Clarín," writes (01/20) "The integrationist partnership sought by the governments of Brazil, Venezuela and Argentina took one more step in the summit held among Nestor Kirchner, Lula and Hugo Chavez by moving on proposals to reach energy and defense deals.

"The construction of the Southern Pipeline... is the task of this energy integration. But in their encounter, the presidents made progress on the oil exploration business, and they now seek to strengthen the three countries' military industries and coordinate their defense policies."

- "The impact of an alliance made under a straw roof"

Maria Luisa Mac Kay, political columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (01/20) "... The US must be closely watching what happens in the Southern Cone at the moment.

"Kirchner, Lula and Chavez made progress on a

strategic alliance based on two fundamental points - energy and defense. They are already talking about their own financial resources to sustain it.

"They developed a pipeline project, which a couple of months ago, sounded like a crazy idea, and they even dared talk about deals to manufacture weapons and aircraft that must have rung alarm bells in Washington.

"Under a straw roof, the three leaders spoke about their alliance following A/S Thomas Shannon's suggestion that 'populist governments' are not necessarily bad for the Bush administration."

- "Mercosur, between politics and economy"

Alejandra Gallo, economic columnist of leading "Clarín," comments (01/20 "During the Brasilia meeting, Argentina and Brazil sought to strengthen - or finally rescue - Mercosur and if they manage to do so, they will favor those who are already members and add new faces.

"They seek to make up a regional alliance that could become a true pole of power, which may be useful in any kind of relationship with the US. Political messages from Argentine presidents Kirchner and Lula were conclusive and confirmed this direction. However, everyday life seems more complex because it is mingled with business, economy and trade deals."

- "Kirchner - 'If an FTA with Uruguay is advisable for Uruguay, then, Uruguay should do it'"

Leading "Clarín's" special envoys to Brasilia write

(01/20) "... During a press interview with 'Clarín,' 'La Nación,' 'Página 12' and 'Telam' wire service agency..., President Kirchner underscored that if Uruguayan President Tabaré Vazquez finds it useful to reach an FTA with the US, then he should do it. We are not gendarmes.'

"Kirchner remarked that the Uruguayan rapprochement with Washington may have been a consequence of the lack of response from its two big partners (Brazil and Argentina) to its requirements... Later on, even Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez himself supported Kirchner's idea - an FTA with the main world power does not necessarily go against South American integration."

- "US business show will be in April"

Business-financial "Ambito Financiero" reports (01/20) "President Nestor Kirchner will meet again with US Assistant Secretary Thomas Shannon on Sunday in La Paz during Evo Morales' presidential inauguration...

"During this meeting, they are expected to discuss the details of the reestablishment of US-Argentine bilateral relationship in terms of trade and investment. Shannon, Kirchner and De Vido will again discuss details of the seminar they talked about during Shannon's visit to Buenos Aires last week.

"Said presentation will happen in April and will be in charge of A/S Shannon and Ambassador Lino Gutierrez, on behalf of the Bush administration, and Argentine Consul to New York Hector Timmermann, on behalf of the Argentine Government."

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GUTIERREZ